

NAPOLÉON.

Special Interview with His Majesty at Wilhelmshöhe.

How the Emperor is Lodged, Waited On, Guarded and Approached.

He Expounds His Position to the American People.

"I Am Glad to See You, as I Am Always When I Meet Citizens of Your Great and Prosperous Country."

"I Have Constantly Read for Years Past the New York Herald."

"The Republic of America and Republic of France Are as Different as White is from Black."

No Throne for the Prince Imperial—"I Love Him Too Well."

How the Emperor Appears, Dresses and Speaks.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

Special Visit to the Castle of Wilhelmshöhe—The Journey and Arrival—At the Hotel and the Hotel Register—Who Have Been There Besides Eugene—The Weather, Scenery and Prussian Guard—Reception by M. Pietri—Complimentary Remark to American Journalism—Bonaparte's Patriotism and Ruin by the "Reds"—A Warning to King William—Bonaparte—How He Appeared and What He Said—The Dethronement and the Dynasty.

LONDON, Nov. 9, 1870.

A special telegram from Wilhelmshöhe, dated on the 6th inst., supplies a most interesting report of an interview which a correspondent of the HERALD has just had with his Majesty Napoleon III., ex-Emperor of France, at his place of imprisonment.

The HERALD correspondent writes as follows:—In reply to my application for permission to visit Napoleon I received the following note:—

WILHELMSHÖHE, Oct. 30, 1870.

SIR—Your communication, with the documents which accompanied it, has been received. I shall return the latter to you here, whither, I presume, you intend to come, in which case I shall acquaint the Emperor of your desire, which cannot be realized unless you are present. Accept, &c., PIETRI.

AT WILHELMSHÖHE.

Journeying in accordance with this note of permission I arrived at Wilhelmshöhe on the 4th inst. It was night. The selection of accommodation was a regular "Hobson's choice." There are only two buildings at the place. One of these is the Castle of Wilhelmshöhe, with its appurtenances; the other, a very spacious and comfortable hotel, called the Schombardt House.

SCENERY.

Snow had fallen a few days before to a depth of several inches. The surrounding mountains presented a really beautiful appearance, and the general aspect of the scenery attracted quite a number of visitors.

Having enjoyed a comfortable rest during the night I rose from bed at an early hour on the morning of the 5th inst. and walked round to the Chateau Wilhelmshöhe.

THE GUARD.

There were a dozen of military sentinels posted at the different portals of the building on guard duty in and around the house, and half a company of soldiers in a temporary barrack near to the building. I found also a detachment of German artillery in charge of six guns. This latter is the same force which recently went through its drill manoeuvres in the presence of the ex-Emperor and received his commendations.

The sentinels act merely as a guard of honor.

VISITORS—WHO THEY ARE.

No attraction less than the fact that the castle harbors and shelters the imperial prisoner could induce people to come from a distance to Wilhelmshöhe. A number of strangers, however, hailing from afar and in the more immediate neighborhood, prompted by curiosity only, arrive at the place daily. These people are generally and for the most part disappointed in the object of their journey. They hope to catch a glimpse of fallen majesty. Very few persons come on business of a special character.

The names of a motley group of guests may be gathered any day from the last page of the register at my hotel. Of these I transcribe the following:—Viscount de Lafferrerie, France; General Fleury and suite, Paris; Dr. Thomas Evans, President of American Ambulance Committee; Dr. Cohn Meis, Dresden, journalist; Prince Charles of Hesse; Robert de Clermont and lady, London; J. F. W. Whitbeck, M. D., New York; General the Marquis de Gallifet, Ems; George N. Fox, New York; Von Malenkrodt, Sister of Mercy, Paderborn; Her Highness Princess Maria, of Baden; Duchess of Hamilton, England; Henry Benda, New York; Madame de Meyerbeer and daughter, Berlin; J. Mortimer, journalist, London; Ducal Chamberlain Von Lemprecht, of Hesse; Countess Cowley (wife of the late British Ambassador in Paris); Rev. H. A. Winn, of Boston; Duchess of Monaco, Princess Murat and suite, London.

EUGÈNE'S VISIT.

The Empress Eugénie, whose visit to her husband had been strictly incognito, had taken her departure privately from the place. Her Majesty was accompanied by the Count du Clary.

M. PIETRI—FIRST RECEPTION.

My first step towards the accomplishment of an

interview was made towards noon. It was to see M. Pietri, at the Castle. Upon entering the reception room I was told that all visitors at Wilhelmshöhe had to be first announced by name to an officer of the royal household of his Majesty King William of Prussia, as a branch of this service, which has been ordered from Berlin for the duty, exercises all such functions in the castle near the person of Napoleon. It happened quite fortunately that the Prussian gentleman then serving was personally known to me.

He expressed his willingness to further my object, and one of the many richly-liveried footmen who stood around was ordered to apprise M. Pietri of my presence.

M. Pietri received me in the wing of the castle in which his business office is located. Having saluted I fully explained to him the object of my present visit and errand. I dwelt on the advantages which would most likely accrue to Bonaparte himself from the Emperor's speaking freely to the American people through the columns of the HERALD, the leading newspaper organ of their country.

M. Pietri listened to my remarks with very polite attention. He remained slightly reserved in his manner, and was evidently engaged for a moment in weighing my words in his mind, as if (as it appeared to me) to enable him to judge of their good faith.

FRANCE'S RUIN—NAPOLÉON'S PATRIOTISM.

At length M. Pietri looked satisfied. He began to take up the conversation in a somewhat warmer manner, dwelling on the present "deplorable" condition of France, and adding that, "so far as he knew or was acquainted with the sentiments of the Emperor Napoleon, he would willingly cede his throne to any government which would rule for the benefit of the country."

"Alas!" said M. Pietri, "none can be found possessing this quality. Ambitious generals, lawyers and political demagogues mislead the French people. Many of these thrust themselves forward to the notice of the public and promise to France what they never can fulfill in her behalf. They foist their own unripe utopian notions upon the credulous masses. The Emperor would not, could not argue with that class of *soi-disant* statesmen and their deluded partisans. Hence there was no manifesto, no act on his part. Her Majesty the Empress was deeply grieved at the disastrous chaos into which France was plunged, and in the absence of which Prussia would have been less intent on the dismemberment of French territory. Prussia, sir, should not stretch the rope too tightly. She should know and be fully conscious that a forcible annexation of provinces inhabited by a hostile population will remain a source of constant danger to herself hereafter. Prussia's present plea of depriving France for all time to come of the power of attacking her is completely untenable. How can she hope to subjugate entirely both the body and soul of the people? Must she not keep a relentless watch, with loaded and cocked revolver in hand, over those whom she has herself driven to an attitude of deadly antagonism to herself? Can she dare to look away for one instant without having a fear that the wounded foe will spring at her throat?"

At this point the eyes of the speaker were gleaming fiercely, as he accompanied his words with energetic gestures; but he (Pietri) continued, after a very slight pause, thus:—"Why, sir, should not the two nations—France and Prussia—cultivate a mutual friendship in a spirit of generosity conducing to their mutual happiness? Such, sir, I assure you, is the fervent wish of his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon, and you will hear it from his own lips if he consents to receive you. I will speak to his Majesty in your behalf, and shall soon bring you his answer."

PRISON LIFE OF BONAPARTE.
Taking leave of M. Pietri I again visited the controller of the royal household. Here I gathered some information respecting the treatment which is extended to the imperial prisoner by order of King William.

I proceed to state facts. Napoleon remains perfectly free in his everyday movements, in the choice of his companions and with regard to his correspondence both by mail and telegraph, having offices for both these services fitted up for his special use in the castle.

When his Majesty first arrived at Wilhelmshöhe his suite consisted of 193 persons. It was subsequently reduced to fifty-nine, by his own express wish. The Emperor is at present surrounded by General Ney, Prince de la Moskowa, Adjutant General of his staff; General Castelnau, Count Reille, Viscount Pajol, Prince Murat, Commander Kepp and Count Lauriston, who are commissioned as adjutants of the staff. The few equestrian are Count Davillier and Counts Raimbeau and Franceschini.

M. Pietri is private secretary to his Majesty.

His physicians are Dr. Corvisart and Dr. Conneau. Dr. Conneau is in London at present.

There are forty servants employed in different modes of duty in the household.

Count Raimbeau saved the Emperor's life from assassination, and Count Reille delivered his Majesty's note of surrender to King William after Sedan.

It is the very act of the Emperor's personal surrender to the King, said my informant, which obliges the latter to treat his captive in a knightly manner and royal style. This explains the reason why there are over one hundred persons of King William's household from Berlin and Potsdam now employed to administer to the personal comfort and wellbeing of Napoleon the Third.

"It was only last Sunday, sir, when the Empress Eugénie arrived here wholly unannounced, and while the Count de Clary, who accompanied her Majesty, demanded to see the Emperor and was shown, as all applicants are, to my office, the Emperor himself stepped out from the grand staircase and led the veiled lady into the castle."

"The arrangement that all persons have to be announced by me became absolutely necessary in consequence of the vast number of persons who had been trying, under various pretexts, to gain access to the castle."

Having concluded the conversation I returned to the hotel to await with patience the answer of Pietri. I there met the correspondent of the St. Petersburg Journal, who was very downcast in mind because he was unable to obtain an audience with M. Pietri. Towards evening I received the following note:—

Monsieur—Veuillez Je vous prie, venir demain matin à 9 heures me voir. J'aurais à vous donner une réponse.
Croyez à mes sentiments distingués,

F. PIETRI.

(Sir—I beg that you will come to see me tomorrow at nine o'clock, when I shall have an answer for you.
Yours, &c.,
F. PIETRI.

Finally at the appointed hour I called again at the castle and listened once more to M. Pietri's polite insinuations, to the effect that interviews of this description cannot be regarded by the Emperor as very advisable or very convenient. "Nevertheless," continued M. Pietri, "in your case his Majesty the Emperor is willing to make an exception; so while I beg to remind you of our conversation yesterday I will now go and announce you."

THE APPROACHES.

I followed M. Pietri while he traversed a number of stately halls and apartments which led to the central portion of the castle.

Having entered the large hall of State, M. Pietri disappeared through a door at one end of it. He remained absent during a few minutes, then returned and invited me to enter through the same door, while he retired.

THE EMPEROR'S ROOM.

To my surprise I found myself in a very small apartment, so small, indeed, that a writing desk, which was placed in the centre of the room, opposite the fire, appeared to take up almost the whole floor.

THE VISIT.

I was face to face with the Emperor Napoleon the Third.

RECEPTION.

His Majesty rose from a chair near to the desk and welcomed me with a very polite bow. He motioned to me to be seated in a fauteuil placed close to his own. After I had taken the seat Napoleon said:—"I am glad to see you, sir, as I am always when I meet citizens of your great and prosperous country."

The tone of extreme affability in which these few words were spoken caused me to feel at home at once, so much so that I moved fully in the cushions of the fauteuil and commenced not only a conversation *en amore*, but at the same moment I could study out every word and shade of the appearance of my illustrious *vis-a-vis*.

NAPOLÉON'S APPEARANCE.

All that you have already heard and read about Napoleon's failing health, pallid complexion, sunken eyes and decrepit condition in general, I found to be the veriest idle "hoax." The Emperor is a stout, portly gentleman, setting forth all the indications of the enjoyment of robust health in his person. His hair shows a very slight tinge of gray. He wears a fine mustache and goatee. His face has a ruddy color. His eyes, though small, appear to be smiling with good humor and benevolence. He has liveliness and grace in every motion. Indeed, I may say that he presents an exceedingly handsome, pleasant exterior, which indicates an age rather of forty-two than sixty-two years. This is perfectly true of his appearance as it impressed me during the interview. I saw such a discrepancy between the picture of the Emperor, as I had previously imagined from apocryphal reports that it might be, that it could have almost caused me to doubt whether this was really Napoleon the Third who was sitting opposite and within a few yards' distance of me had I not been reassured by the surrounding objects near the writing desks, such as a miniature portrait of the Empress in a golden frame, painted and engraved and set in diamonds, the monogram "L. N." on the boxes, and the seals and rings which were either lying about or worn by his Majesty.

NAPOLÉON'S DRESS.

Napoleon was dressed in a plain suit of citizen's clothing, wearing on his breast the ribbon of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor.

THE CONVERSATION.

First having expressed my acknowledgments of the great kindness displayed by his Majesty in receiving me at a time when he was so engrossed in other important affairs, I ventured to add that his granting an audience to a correspondent of the great leading American journal, the HERALD, was a tribute to the power and influence of the press in the United States.

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—Yes; I have well known and constantly read for years past the New York HERALD. Certainly, all must admit that the press is a powerful institution. In France the press has worked much good, but also much injury. When I consented to its being freed entirely from the censorship it was seized by demagogues and unscrupulous politicians who openly preached disobedience to the laws; and they were but too successful in perverting the mind of the people.

CORRESPONDENT—Your Majesty has been in the United States and may recollect that there newspapers are read by everybody and their contents thoroughly understood by all. The same intelligence does not prevail in France that is found in the United States. Would your Majesty ascribe the terrible catastrophe now convulsing the country to the press alone?

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—No, not entirely, though to a great extent, especially in the southern departments of France. The seditious arguments advanced by the press, when in the hands of pretended reformers, easily inflamed the untutored minds of the people.

CORRESPONDENT—I cannot conceal the fact, your Majesty, that the recent declaration of the republic in France has had the effect of arousing the sympathy of the American people, who, perhaps, without closely investigating the fitness of the nation for such a change, have hailed the new form of government as a step toward improvement in political life.

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—I suppose that Americans would naturally sympathize with republican institutions; but all conditions required to a true republican form of government are

absolutely wanting in France. Those who boldly grasped the reins of power have already discovered their inability to establish such a government. That for which they blamed me most, and they have been compelled to do themselves, and in a form still more obnoxious.

Constance, was the constant theme of most violent attacks on my government; but while I made moderate use of the law, while I used mild system of *avertissements*, they have suppressed a number of journals because they did not chime in with their fantastic ideas of republican sentiments, presupposing a vital interest of a majority of the people in what concerns the country, and a willingness to put their shoulder to the wheel, which does not exist in France. I can illustrate to you the utter political indifference which pervades the masses by the following incident:—One of the representatives in the Department of the Jura, an officer of my army, a friend to me personally, and a staunch imperialist, who was at the same time wealthy and a citizen well known and highly esteemed in the community, died. At an election called to fill the vacancy another wealthy and well-known citizen, M. Grevy, was chosen almost unanimously, without even having been asked to make known his political convictions. It was afterwards discovered, to the great astonishment of his constituency, that he was politically the antipode of his predecessor, and of course a strong antagonist of my government.

The good people never inquired what were his sentiments, nor did they care. They had been asked to vote for him, and did so. That he should be an exponent, however, of their political views never occurred to them. How could it, in the absence of real political intelligence? The republic of America and the republic of France are as different as white is from black. Your country submits to the law. Public sentiment and public spirit, based upon general intelligence and morality, dictate the control of society. Are not your theatres in New York and Boston allowed to perform such plays as they deem fit?

CORRESPONDENT—Certainly they are.

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—Suppose they should treat the public to performances of impure and offensive pieces, what would be the consequences? The press would denounce them. Nobody would go to see them. They would be condemned by the verdict of the public. But in France, just over the way, the greater the departure from morality and decorum the greater will be the crowd flocking to delight in it. It is no easy work to curb such an extravagant and depraved spirit in a country so often, unhappily, shaken by revolution. It requires the utmost energy to build up anything, any form of State government.

CORRESPONDENT—Will your Majesty please enlighten the American people as to the immediate causes of the catastrophe which dethroned your government?

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—I can only liken it to an earthquake, sir, produced by the combined action of hidden influences in the elements, the existence of which we are aware of, without being able to trace their sudden operations. My government has been almost too willing to listen to the clamors of those who, sometimes *bona fide*, imagined they knew best how to promote the welfare of the country. I thus consented to the removal of the last existing check to the right of free assemblies of people. As soon as I had done so the privilege was abused to an unlimited extent. Public meetings no longer discussed political or social questions in a cool and dignified manner, but at once became tumultuous in the highest degree, and during the whole year "assassination," "poisoning," "rebellion" and all the most abominable doctrines were openly preached to the masses and urged upon them as the best and only means of saving the country.

CORRESPONDENT—Indeed, such a condition of affairs does not augur stability for a republican government. The views of your Majesty, who is such an able judge, will deeply interest the American people.

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—I know them to be a frank-hearted, generous nation, and I cannot believe they approve of the slanderous accusations now preferred against me. Have you read the vile statement published in the *Independence Belge* and in other journals, to the effect that I had appropriated the public funds, and conjured up war to conceal such illegal transactions? I wish to state emphatically that the commission of such a breach of trust under my government in France, even if desired, is an utter impossibility. Not a single franc is expended without severe checks on the part of the administration. This fact is well known to every intelligent person in France. I could hardly attempt to contradict all these vile calumnies, though I have denied a few of them. In order to show that by far the largest part of my own civil list has been expended by me for the benefit of the public institutions of the country you may have seen the statement which was published by my order and signed Monsieur Thelin, my treasurer. It contradicts the unfounded assertion of a certain M. Pol.

CORRESPONDENT—I have, your Majesty, and would say certainly that no blame or reproach can attach under any circumstances to a chief magistrate for having saved as much money as he honestly can during his term of office. Such recriminations are considered in America unworthy the notice of respectable people.

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—I have some property in Italy which was left to me by my father. My wife has a private dowry and her jewelry. With these exceptions we have nothing.

CORRESPONDENT—Your Majesty having broached the topic, will you please say how it is about the story that you have 23,000,000 francs' worth of property in Broadway, New York?

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—I have no property there of any kind or description. The story is unfounded—as unfounded as are all the rest.

CORRESPONDENT—The accusations with which

the press is teeming are not confined to this point. Treason is charged, and, strange to say, French soldiers, prisoners in Germany, utter the same words. Their answer to the questions asked them is, "Nous sommes trahis!"

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—Poor men! It is their mistaken pride and ambition. They are naturally loth to acknowledge or even believe that they have been conquered.

CORRESPONDENT—But, your Majesty, you yourself are reported to have said on one occasion of a verse on the field of battle, "*Je suis trahi!*"

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—I did not. It is a pure invention, like so many others. What I may have said, and what many members of the government said, was, probably, "We deceived ourselves as to the strength of our own army as well as that of the Prussians." As for myself, basing my opinion upon personal conviction, I have often cautioned my Ministers against erroneous estimates. I well recollect, how often Marshal Niel pointed to drawers in his desk and told me, with confidence, that the army was completely organized and equipped and ready for every operation. It was no less the case with Marshal Leboeuf. It was probably no fault of their hearts, but of their heads, that they would not listen to me when I told them that we could not compete with Prussia's military establishment; that our effective strength, as compared to hers, was insufficient. This was the deception, the fault of which must be shared more or less by all of us, and which has led to the most disastrous results. We were to have had ready for service at a moment's notice 200,000 reserves. When they were needed, however, not more than one half the number were at hand, and these only after a delay of weeks. Thus the Prussians got "ahead" of us, as you would say. Notwithstanding all this the bravery of our troops obliged them to use double numbers of men, &c., to gain easy victories. What is the feeling in Berlin?

CORRESPONDENT—Peace is the general desire of the people. Peace by all means.

EMPEROR NAPOLEON—France, too, needs peace. But the conditions imposed by Count Bismarck are too exacting, extreme, sir. What government in France could accept them and at the same time maintain itself against the outraged people? France cannot endure so deep a humiliation.

CORRESPONDENT—As to the sentiment in Berlin, the people have been so worked up on by the official press that it may be regarded as an impossibility for even Bismarck to lower his demand for territorial annexation on the largest scale.

EMPEROR (with deep emotion).—France cannot bear this!

CORRESPONDENT—Considering that your Majesty may be recalled to the throne, and France may yet become prosperous, though losing a portion of her territory, why should your Majesty commit yourself on a question of this character?

EMPEROR NAPOLEON (musingly).—You may be right.

At this moment the Emperor, who had been all cheerfulness previously, sighed for the first time.

CORRESPONDENT—Will your Majesty have the goodness to explain why the provisional government so obstinately refuses to hold an election for Representatives in the Constituent Assembly?

EMPEROR—In my opinion because it is afraid of the reds.

CORRESPONDENT—Should they not have just as much reason to apprehend that a large number of Bonapartists may be returned?

EMPEROR—I do not think so. The discordant elements of socialism, communism and anarchy have spread terror throughout the country and gotten the upper hand, and it is very difficult to contend with such utopian and seductive influences.

CORRESPONDENT—I am pleased to see evidence of your Majesty's bodily health and strength. But does your Majesty feel mentally strong enough to resume the reins of government in case

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